WHY SHOULD EASTERN CONNECTICUT FARMERS SPEND OVER $1,200,000 FOR FODDER?

Suggestions from a Practical Farmer as to Increasing Fodder Crops and Saving Money

Ten Years Advance in Agriculture.

Things are moving. Even on the farms of New London and Windham counties they are moving—a little. If one can't see much change, from day to day, the change is visible on a comparison of to-day with ten years ago.

The latest census returns show that between 1900 and 1910 the value of farm property in the two counties increased from $18,823,000 to $21,848,000—a gain of over $3,000,000. The value of the land in farms grew by more than $1,100,000; the value of farm buildings by more than $1,200,000; the value of domestic animals, poultry and bees by almost half a million; and the value of farming tools and machinery by over $230,000.

That looks pretty good, eh? Shows that the old clock is still running, anyway, and that it isn't running all on tick, either.

But there are always two sides to a board and two ways of looking at a picture and two things—at least—which you can show by figures.

While the value of the farms has increased, the amount of improved and unimproved land held in farms in 1910 was 559,748 acres, which is 25,669 acres less than the acreage of 1900. While the value of buildings and implements and stock has grown, the area of improved land in the farms actually operated dropped off by 12,000 acres.

This, you'll observe, is different. It has a different look and leaves a different taste in the mouth. The population of the two counties has grown in the ten years by an even 10,000; values of farms and farm property have increased, but the amount of land actually farmed and the amount of land held in farms have both decreased.

Here's a question for the local granges to think over and explain. Probably there is an explanation; there may be several explanations; one in one town and another in the next. One thing only is reasonably certain: the land hasn't actually disappeared off the map or the face of the earth. It's still there; hasn't been lost, strayed or stolen. Some of it may have become so ashamed of the way it was farmed that it has covered its face with bushes to hide from sight. Or it may be playing a sort of statistical hide-and-seek in the census figures. It would at least be interesting to know what has become of it.

You don't really suppose, do you, that a 25,669-acre farm has been "abandoned" in eastern Connecticut since 1900?

A Large Number of Mortgaged Farms.

Perhaps the farm mortgage situation may have a bearing of some sort on the matter. Of the 4,328 farms in the two counties operated by their owners, 1,559 report a mortgage debt in 1910. Four farms out of every ten mortgaged! One would like to know, if figures about it were obtainable, whether it was mostly on these mortgaged farms that the acreage of improved land had decreased.

Even with the decrease reported, the two counties still lead the state in the percentage of their land area actually farmed. In New London county 75.5 per cent. of all the land is farmed; in Windham county 70.4 per cent. The average for the whole state is only 71 per cent., and no other county equals the record of either. In size of individual farms, also, the two counties are above the average. The average farm in them is of 103.7 acres, which is exceeded only in Litchfield. The average for the state is 81.5 acres. It is pleasant to note that there are only 14 farms in both counties of a thousand acres or more, while there are 2,311 of less than a hundred acres.

This is cheering and hopeful. Whatever may be said about the big farm and its money-making capacity, when managed by some exceptionally capable farmer, the fact still remains that, for the average farmer, it is the small farm, personally managed, which affords the best chance. We have not yet got beyond the wisdom of the old song which you all remember, about "The little farm, well tilled."

A Set of Interesting Facts Disclosed.

There is one set of facts disclosed by the census of 1910, however, which ought to furnish food for deep and earnest thought by the farmers of eastern Connecticut. These are the facts relating to farm expenses and farm crops. In 1909—the year covered by the census reports—the farmers of New London and Windham counties paid out, in one way or another, for farm labor, $951,112. This is, of course, exclusive of their own labor. It is what they paid to others in wages, board and rent, for farm help. It is the cost of the "hired man" for the year. That same year, they paid out for fertilizers $181,816; this, also, of course, exclusive of the farm-made manures. It was their bill to the commercial fertilizer trust.

In addition, they paid for feed for their stock, during 1909, $1,020,-136.

In other words, they paid for horse and cattle feed almost as much as they paid for both labor and fertilizer.

One is inclined to wonder whether, if they had paid that additional million for more labor and more manure they might not have raised for themselves all the feed they needed—and left their farms in better condition.

An Inviting Opportunity to Increase Crops.

Let's analyze the figures relating to certain principal crops—I'm about as anxious to get through this statistical part as you are!—In that year, 1909, New London and Windham counties had in corn 16,552 acres, which yielded, at harvest, 489,515 bushels of corn. This was at the rate of 46 bushels per acre. This past year White of Collinsville raised 112 bushels of shelled dry corn to the acre. If our two counties, with the acreage they had planted, had done just one-half as well, they would have harvested a hundred thousand bushels of corn more than they actually did!

And they would thereby have saved buying just a hundred thousand bushels of feed.

Take oats. In 1909 the two counties sowed and harvested 2,076 acres of oats, getting from them 54,194 bushels of threshed grain. This was at the rate of 26 bushels per acre. I don't happen to recall the record figures for oats, but a hundred bushels to the acre has been exceeded many times. A farmer up in Calgary, in the Canadian northwest, two years ago, on land which had been considered too dry for grain, raised by the Campbell dry-farming methods a crop running 132 bushels to the acre, averaging 48 pounds in weight to the measured bushel. If our two counties had done only half as well, they would have harvested 82,000 bushels more than they did.

And they would thereby have saved buying just 82,000 bushels of feed.

The average yield of rye for the two counties was less than fifteen bushels to the acre, and the average yield of buckwheat only about fifteen and half—oh, no: this wasn't last summer with its damaging droughts: it was in 1909, when we had a fair, average season. The average yield of the two counties, for the four thousand acres they had in potatoes, was close to 108 bushels per acre. This isn't so awful bad. But for untold years, the potato growers of the island of Jerseys have averaged a thousand bushels to every three acres. The Ohio potato specialists expect to get 350 bushels an acre in a dry year—at least 300 in an average year. And their land isn't naturally, as well adapted to potato-growing as land in Connecticut.

But it's when we come to hay that the showing is most discouraging. The two counties had in hay and forage crops of all sorts that census year, 94,232 acres. And they cut from those acres 111,564 tons of hay.

A little over a ton and a fifth to the acre!

Even the clover yield, which ought to be about the heaviest of any of the cultivated grasses, was only 31,000 tons off 30,000 acres. And this in the state where Clark of Higganum for years averaged five tons to the acre from his sixteen-acre grass-field which was originally too poor to bear good moss! Why, if it hadn't been for the inclusion in the census figures of "coarse forage," meaning, I suppose, cornstalks and corn ellage, and which averaged over seven tons to the acre—if it hadn't been for the inclusion of that item in the hay and forage report, the average for hay alone in the two counties would scarcely have exceeded a ton to the acre.

What Do These Statistics Mean to Farmers?

Now, I believe I've got through with statistics from the census. The next thing is to consider what they mean to us of the two counties as farmers; to own up where they prove us at fault, and to seek some means of remedying the fault.

First, it is to be noted that they show we had to buy over a million dollars' worth of feed; import it from somewhere else, to keep our stock going.

Why not raise it ourselves, feed it to our own stock, or sell it to each other, and keep the money at home, where it is most needed and where it belongs?

Perhaps you'll answer that our land, here in the east, is too valuable to put into grains; that the great west, on its cheaper lands, can raise them more profitably than we. But that great west hasn't any such "cheaper lands" suitable for grain-growing. The average value of the farm lands of New London and Windham counties, as reported to the census, is just $16.16 an acre. Men who have good grain land in Illinois and Iowa and Nebraska and even the Dakotas hold it at anywhere from $50 to $200 an acre. They grow their wheat and their corn and their oats on land which costs more and is rated as worth more, acre for acre, than eastern Connecticut lands. About the only advantage they have, as regards land, is that their prairies can be worked easier than our hillsides and intervales. It won't do to allow them the benefit of alleged "cheaper land," for it isn't cheaper, it's dearer.

Nor will it do to say that then can raise better crops, acre for acre. They can't, at least, they don't. Why, the average wheat yield of the whole United States is only about fifteen bushels per acre. And that average is raised considerably by the comparatively high yields of the east. It is such states as New York and Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, yes, and Connecticut, with their yields of 25 and 27 and 28 bushels, which bring up the average for the whole. If they were disregarded the average yield of the wheat states of the west would be less, even, than it is. Connecticut hasn't as many acres which will grow wheat and corn as Illinois or Iowa or Nebraska. But where wheat is grown in Connecticut, it yields much better than in any of the states mentioned. As to corn, why, all that's necessary to do is to point to the last two years when the record crops of the country have been produced in Massachusetts and Connecticut, respectively. The best crop of the best acre in the famous "corn belt" never equaled the best crops produced in these two New England states. The average crop of the average farm in the "corn belt" isn't as good as the average crop on the average farm in Connecticut ought to be, whether it is or no. What man has done, man can do, and what one man has done another may come somewhere near doing, if he tries as hard and works as wisely.

Now, there's no use attempting to make up hard-and-fast rules for farming. Nor is there any great gain in Farmer A blindly imitating Farmer B, who may have raised better crops. One star differeth from another in glory, one farm differeth from another in cussedness. No man but the wearer knows where his shoe pinches, and no man but the farmer knows so well what his own land will do and what it won't.

But—as President Cleveland once said—it is a condition which confronts us, not a theory.

A Million Dollars Spent For Fodder.

Here's over a million dollars spent by the farmers of just two counties buying feed for their stock; buying it from out of the state; sending their money out of the state to buy it with. For remember right here, that when you pay your money to your local grain and feed dealer, he keeps only that small part of it which embraces his profit. The rest all goes to Chicago or Minneapolis or some other far-away western point to pay for the stuff he buys there in carloads, as you buy it of him in tons. You are not "keeping your money at home" when you use it to buy, even of a local dealer, the things he must buy from abroad. All you're "keeping at home" is the percentage of profit he rakes off. And you're keeping that at his home—not your own.

Right there is the point: If it is in any way practicable, wouldn't it be wiser to keep all that money really at home, i. e., right in your own breeches-pocket—all of it—including the dealer's profit as well as the distant cost of the feed, by raising your own feed right on the farm?

That's a question to which the average Connecticut farmer, who knows the value of money and how hard it is both to get and to keep, can have but one answer for.

The real question, of course, is whether or no it is practicable to do this thing.

As to that, every individual farmer is and ought to be his own judge. He knows his own farm better than any one else can. At least, he ought to. But it isn't wise nor yet sensible for any farmer to leap to a conclusion, even about his own farm. It's slower work crawling to a conclusion—but somehow, if you crawl and take your time about it, you'll find out more about the stumps in the way. You may, likewise, pick up a little new and surprising information about the dirt you crawl over—if you crawl slowly enough and dig your fingers and toes deep enough into it, every hitch.

Because one hasn't ever raised his own feed is not conclusive proof that he couldn't, if he tried. Even the fact that he may have tried it once and failed doesn't warrant a verdict of guilty against the poor farm. It may be well that the failure was due to an unusual season, or to mismanagement.

Don't get impatient at the suggestion that you may have mismanaged. One sure test of a really good farmer is that he owns up, without a blush or a stammer, that he doesn't know all there is to know about managing his farm. It's only the stupidly or arrogantly ignorant farmer who never makes a mistake and who knows it all. There's about as much use of reasoning with such a creature as there is in trying to make a rope out of sand, or in carrying water to put out a fire in a sieve. It's generally the sophomore who has just begun the study of physics who answers, off-hand and dogmatically, any question in science. The gray-haired old professor, who has been studying and experimenting and testing for half a century, will be more apt to take your question in silence and chew over it for a while, and then give you a hesitating hypothesis as to what may, possibly, help you to arrive at an explanation. So the farmer who really knows the most is usually the most modest about his own farming, the readiest to admit his own failures and mistakes, and the most eager to try it over again, if circumstances permit.

Assuming it as possible, then, that you may not have managed previous grain crops right, why not look over the situation again, read up on the latest results and the methods by which they were achieved, and thoughtfully consider whether you might not be able to save for your own pocket the money you have been accustomed to paying out for stock feed.

Don't forget, in thus thinking it over, that if you should spend exactly as much more for labor and fertilizer, every year, as you now spend for imported feed, you will still be better off. For the fertilization and tillage needful to grow good crops is a lasting, at least a continuing benefit to the land fertilized and tilled. I don't know what that acre on which Mr. White raised his 112 bushels of shelled corn was worth before he put the corn in. But, whatever it was, it is worth more now—a good deal more. It's worth more to grow potatoes on; it's worth more to grow vegetables on; it's worth more to grow grass on. Say, I'd like to see how much clear, clean timothy a fellow could raise on that acre!

The Greater Crops Raised in Europe.

Why is it that the average yield of almost any crop is about double in Europe what it is in this country? Farmers out west turn over the sod of a virgin prairie which never before felt a plowshare and never before grew anything but grass or weeds. And they get, on the average, just about half as many bushels to the acre as the farmers of England get on land which has been plowed and cropped and plowed and cropped, over and over again, for more than a thousand years. They get less than half the crop which farmers of Germany get on land which has constantly cropped for two thousand years—ever since the old Germanii, whom Caesar had such a time licking, dug up the dirt with wooden spades or scratched it with plows made from crooked sticks. The average wheat yield in the United States, as I have said, is less than fifteen bushels per acre; the average in England is about thirty bushels, and in Germany more than thirty-three.

Why is it that these old lands produce better crops than our new soils, which we suppose to be rich with the inherited and accumulated fertility of untold ages.

One reason is that they farm better, over there. Now, don't get excited, and go into an old-fashioned Fourth of July rhodomontade over American shrewdness and American intelligence and American capacity and all that. If our fathers had used their farming brains more and their bragging mouths less in the past, we should have been farther ahead than we are. It is just this ignorant habit of boasting about ourselves, as if we were the pick of the earth, which is helping to hold us back. When we get over it and come to see that we're just common folks like others, and that we can sometimes learn a thing or two from other common folks, we'll at least have got our faces turned towards the get-ahead side of the road. They can farm better, abroad, than we do. They have to, or they'd die of starvation. They haven't any new land to move to when they've exhausted the old. They haven't unlimited areas to spread out over when the production of their restricted acres begins to fall. And so they've learned the lesson of conservation, which we're just beginning to talk about—and which most of us, even now, are inclined to sneer at as a sort of "fad."

They save manure, for one thing, which we let go wholly to waste or allow to deteriorate to a fraction of its real value by our shiftless methods of storing. There's little Denmark, for example. It's a mighty small country, about as big as the three states of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island; not nearly as big as Vermont and New Hampshire; not anything like half as big as the single state of Maine. And it's wholly a farming country. It hasn't manufactures enough to fill a single factory on the Shetucket. All the people are farmers and the sons of farmers. Nevertheless, it's one of the richest countries, acre for acre and man for man, in the world. Moreover, it's getting richer all the time. One way it is doing this is just by saving manure. Those who have observed the Danish farmer's stock and barns are simply amazed at the amount of manure he gets and uses. He keeps all the stock his acreage will warrant, which, in the present year, is just about twice as much as a similar acreage in Connecticut is supposed to be capable of doing; and he saves every ounce and every drop of the manure they make. He draws the manure, as it is made, every day, or as often as a load accumulates.

The Shrinkage of Manure in the Open.

Have you any idea of how much this one item of daily drawing saves? I once kept careful tab on the amount of manure which was thrown on the heap behind a two-horse stable. Then I kept equally careful tab from the amount which was drawn from that heap, after it had lain a year. In bulk, the pile yielded less than one-ninth of what had been thrown upon it. That is, for every nine bushels of manure thrown out from the stables during the year, there was less than one bushel of manure in the spring to haul on the land. Of course, it was somewhat heavier, bushel for bushel, and it was somewhat more rotten and probably more quickly available as plant food. It wouldn't be fair to say that the manure pile was worth only one-nineth of what it would have been if drawn out and spread, fresh. But it is certainly safe to say that it wasn't worth one-half as much. And even then no account is taken of the liquid manure, practically all of which was wasted by this method and which is certainly worth half as much as the whole of the solid manure. Assuming that the solid manure wasted in manurial value by one-half and that the wasted liquid manure was worth as much as the half that was saved of the solid, this farmer threw away, every year, fully three-quarters of the value of the manure he might have used to enrich his land.

The Danish farmer saves every bit of his manure, solid and liquid. He is as fareful of it as we are of the ground feed that we buy by the bag at Dickens-only-knows how much a hundred. That is one reason why he doesn't have to buy his ground feed. And that is, also, one reason why his farm is annually getting richer, and he himself also getting richer. He wouldn't think of buying fertilizer so long as a single ounce or a single spoonful of his barn-made manure was being wasted. He saves it all and grows his own feed with it, thereby saving both feed bill and fertilizer bill—two bills which amounted to over $1,200,000 for the farmers of New London and Windham counties, in 1910.

Moreover, this single matter of manure is only one of the details wherein the European farmers excel us. They study their soils as we don't—many of us; they care for their crops as we don't—many of us; they cultivate as we don't—many of us; they co-operate in buying their supplies and selling their produce, as we simply won't.

As a result of these and other things, their lands—old and worn as they are—produce better crops than our new lands. Their experience is simply incontestable proof of the fact that continued farming—if so be it is wise and honest farming—does not exhaust land but improves it. The farm which has been worked constantly for a thousand years is a better farm than the one which has lain untouched all that time—if only it had been really farmed, not robbed and plundered. The single field which has been wisely farmed for even a year or two is, at the end of that time, a better field than its neighbor which has lain idle the same time.

A Larger Outlay Would Increase Crops and Profits.

What we're trying to come at is just this: Even if we farmers of eastern Connecticut should spend as much money for extra work and extra manure to raise the feed we now buy as we pay for that feed, we'd still be making money; because we'd be enriching our farms and enhancing their value. Also, the million or so we now send to Minneapolis or some other distant place would remain right here, doing business among ourselves and for ourselves.

Not long ago a western visitor told me of a little experience two of his neighbors had with corn. Their farms lay side by side and were about as like as two peas. That year they both planted corn at the same time. One put in a hundred acres; the other put in forty. Each had three teams. The forty-acre man plowed deep, harrowed till the ground was as mellow as an onion-bed, cultivated his crop till the corn was too big to work. He kept his three teams busy most of the time on that forty acres. The other man plowed in a hurry and harrowed just enough to get dirt to cover the seed. He cultivated the hundred acres once, in the usual get-through-as-quick-as-you-can way. The man who took care of his forty acres and gave his land adequate tillage, cribbed two thousand bushels of ear corn that fall; the hundred-acre man who merely slobbered over his field had to hunt in the weeds at harvest time to get five hundred bushels. The expense of cultivating and caring for the forty-acre lot was almost if not quite as much as that put on the hundred acres adjoining. But the result—! Not only did the forty-acre man get four times the crop, but he left his forty acres in such shape that they were eager to grow another good crop the next year, while the hundred acres over the fence had to lie fallow the following summer to catch their breath, after the abuse they'd had.

In that little story lies a moral some of us might well take to heart. We try to do too much, to farm too many acres. Other things being equal, it is better for the immediate present to do only what we can do well. It certainly is vastly better for the future of the farm. A crop the work on which we have to slur because we have so much of it or so many others that we can't give it the time and care it demands is going to pay us back for our neglect by inferior yield. Worse than that, the field which we thus scant of its due attention is going to revenge itself on us by going backward. It will become exhausted, worn out, sooner or later.

Something Wrong in Our Methods.

Doen't it seem a little like carrying coals to Newcastle to think of farmers, in the state where the best corn ever grown in the world was raised last year, sending money to other states where poorer crops of poorer quality are produced, to buy corn?

Perhaps, the last time you tried to grow corn you hadn't manure enough for the field and had to spread it rather thin and buy some high-priced fertilizer, even then, to help out. The crop turned out poor. It didn't pay for the work and the fertilizer and the trouble. You felt you could buy provender cheaper than you could raise the corn for it. Yet, if you had saved all your manure—as those pesky Danes do—you'd have had more than enough to cover your field heavily all over. If that had seemed impracticable, then the use of what manure you did have on half the area would have resulted in a saving in the labor bill and an increase in the rate of yield which might have turned a loss to a profit. Anyway, it would have made that half you did attend to vastly better for future use.

Oats, too. We all know the usual way in which oats are grown. And the census figures tell us the usual results—26 bushels to the acre right about here. It seems hardly credible that the farmer who knows his soil, who puts oats on land fit for them, who uses good seed and takes proper care of the crop—it seems hardly credible that such a farmer should be satisfied with a yield of 26 bushels. If the yield is no bigger, in spite of honest work and intelligent zeal, then it must be because there is something wrong with the soil or the management of the crop. Only last fall I walked over the oat-field which a neighbor had just reaped. The land was originally quite rich. A crop of potatoes had been grown on it the year before, and the land had been fertilized for them. One result was that the oats grew about six feet high—and then tumbled over. I don't think one-half of the stalks were cut by the reaper. They lay too flat on the ground. The owner had no time to get on with a scythe and hook up the lodged grain. Whether there were any berries on it or not, the straw was worth something. And it was half lost, half of the natural value, half of the possible yield on a twenty acre patch. Now, this wasn't the fault of the land nor the fault of the crop nor the fault of the seed nor the fault of the season. It was due to faulty management. The ground wasn't in the right shape for oats, to begin with, and the owner had put in at least twice as many acres as he could take care of, for another thing. I don't know how many bushels of grain he actually got, nor how many tons of straw. But I do know that he might have got just as much of a crop off half as much land at a decreased labor cost, if he had fitted his crop to his land and his land to his crop. Also, I know that the new seeding on that twenty acres, which must have cost him a pretty penny at last season's prices of timothy and clover seed, is practically valueless—smothered under the lodged oats. He'll have to plow the lot again and put a lot more labor and a lot more seed on it before he gets it back into tolerable grass.

Now, that particular neighbor isn't a dum fool, by any manner of means. He's well up to the average of us common folk. He made a mistake—just exactly as you and I have done, over and over again. He mismanaged a crop, just as we have done. But when we make mistakes and when we mismanage—you and I—we are not bound in honor to keep on repeating the mistake and renewing the mismanagement, whether some one else does so or not.

A Queer Argument Against Increase

The very queerest argument which I have heard advanced against the local raising of grain for stockfeed is in the allegation that it couldn't be ground at home. The old-fashioned grist mills have all been abandoned since the coming of cheap western flours and feeds," says one. "Where yould you get your grain ground, after you had raised it?" Well, well; that does beat the Dutch!

In the first place, it isn't quite true that "all" the old grist-mills have been abandoned. There are still some millstones turning or some rollers working in Connecticut. And there would mighty soon be more, if they were called for. We Connecticut Yankees don't throw chances for doing business over our shoulders. The advance of milling knowledge and the spread of invention has made the modern mill almost an automatic device, and, in its smaller forms, a rather cheap one. If there were ten or twenty thousand bushels of grain in some town waiting to be ground, it wouldn't be long before some one in that town would have a mill established, capable of taking care of it. **We needn't** worry much over that.

Now don't get the idea that some swell-headed amateur in the newspaper is undertaking to tell you how to run your own farm. That is most decidedly not what all this is intended for. I don't know your farm, and you do. That is, I don't know anything about it, and you probably know a little something about it. But you don't know it all; and, if you've got the root of the matter in you, you'll be the first to admit as much. There may be possibilities in that old farm of yours which you haven't wholly understood, even after all your long years of farming. Perhaps it simply won't grow either corn or oats—or anything else except cordwood and hoop-poles. Perhaps not, but somehow I don't seem to remember any farm in Eastern Connecticut which didn't look, on the outside, as if it might raise a few other things, if it were given the right chance. But prehaps you can't grow corn or oats on it. It may be a potato farm, good for the tubers, but not for cereals. Well, in that case, you'll simply have to keep on buying your feed, and raising potatoes to pay for it. Even then, it is certainly to be hoped that you will not be satisfied with a yield of 109 bushels to the acre. If your farm is a natural potato farm it ought to do at least twice as well as that. There are too many thousand potato-growers averaging from 200 to 250 bushels a year to make it possible any longer to doubt the feasibility of such crops. If your land doesn't produce them it means one of two things, and two things only—either it isn't as good potato ground as you've thought, or else you're not managing it right.

It may be that your land isn't specially adapted to either cereals or potatoes, but is fine for vegetables or berries or orcharding. It may be that you can easily produce enough of some other crop to more than pay all the feed producing crops you could raise with greater toil.

No one else knows these things as well as you do—or as you can, if you'll take the trouble to find out. You're the judge and the jury and the sheriff for your own farm. You're also its doctor. And its feeder. And its trained nurse. And its midwife.

Why Should You Put Out a Million and a Quarter?

Only, I beg of you, stop and think seriously just what you are doing when you and the other 5,378 farmers of these two counties pay out, every year, about a million and a quarter dollars for feed that might be raised in the two counties, and for fertiliser that might be saved, over and above present savings, from the stock now kept in them.

A penny saved is two pence earned. That means in money. But a penny saved in feed is mighty close to a nickel earned; and a penny saved in manure is going to be worth a dime to your farm and to you, sooner or later.

I don't tell you that you, individually, **can raise your feed cheaper** than you can buy it, for I don't know your circumstances, your farm, nor you. But I do say that it would be a big saving for your pocket, and a big improvement to your farm, if you could keep in that pocket and on that farm the money you are now sending off it to buy imported feeds and commercial fertilizers. The chances are that a whole lot of you have never really tried to see what you could do in that line. It is not unlikely that a good many have never thought of this feed and fertilizer buying as a farm leak. On an average you'll say that you don't buy very much, individually. A little bran, now and then; a bag of horse-feed occasionally; perhaps a little cottonseed oil or linseed cake, or something of that sort. Your own personal purchases don't amount to very much, and don't impress you as of great consequence. But it's "many a mickle mawes a muckle;" it's the little raindrops that fill the springs and the little springs that feed the brooks, and the little brooks that swell the river. When you come to appreciate the amount that you have, all of you together, paid out, year by year, for these things, then the sizability of the sum ought to strike you uncomfortably. Nearly a million and a quarter dollars in New London and Windham counties alone; over seven millions and a quarter in the whole state; that's the sum we farmers are paying other farmers for farm-produced things. That's what we're paying other farmers to produce on other farms.

While it is very possible that, in individual cases, this going off the farm to buy farm produce may be necessary or judicious, it is inherently improbable that the practice is generally either necessary or wise. As a rule, a farm which won't grow farm crops isn't a very useful farm. It's about as much of a farm as a clock-case without the works is a clock. It may look all right, but if the blamed thing won't go, it certainly seems about time for a clockmaker to get busy.

What the Census Reports Mean.

When the census reports the amount of "feed" bought, it is to be understood, I suppose, that grain, either whole or ground, is meant. The term does not include hay, which would be classed as "forage." Nevertheless, the condition of the hay-mow in the barn affects the feed-buying question very strongly. While few stock-feeders adhere to the old-fashioned theory that stock can be kept well on hay alone, it is still a fact that a great deal of the bulk, and no small proportion of the nutritive valtie of the desirable stock ration is derived from hay. When the hay supply is short the demand for grain is increased When the hay-mow is well filled there is less grain called for. One doesn't want to feed either hay alone or grain alone. But with good, well-cured sweet hay and clover, one can very largely decrease the proportion of grain called for by his stables.

Certainly, there is immense room for improvement in our hay crop. The census figures show an average yield to the acre, in the season of 1909, of about a ton and a fifth. Probably there are few farmers in the state who don't know of the work of the late George M. Clark of Higganum, with his sixteen acre hay field. We can recall, most of us, with what incredulity we heard the first stories if the yields he got, and how it wasn't till the land had been measured by outsiders and till they had watched the cutting and drying and weighing of the crops, that we were finally compelled to admit the truth of his claims. But the evidence became too strong for us(in time, and we had to own up that he was raising about as much hay on one acre as we were were on four—about as much as we still average on four. We had to admit, too, that he was getting more clear profit off one acre than we could figure off four. Probably no one now questions the accuracy of his claims as to yield or profit. But a lot of us still question the feasibility of applying his methods to our farms.

Well, we don't have to do just as he did. We are our own bosses. If we don't think we can do things as he did them, we're not compelled to by any law or obligation. There are several ways to skin a cat, and the best way for any particular kind of cat depends upon the cat and the skinner.

(Continued on Next Page.)

THE BULLETIN'S CORN GROWING CONTEST FOR 1912

$230.00 in Prizes for Competing Farmers

IN SEVEN PRIZES—$100. to 1st; $50. to 2nd; $25. to 3rd and 4th; and $10. each to next three in order

To Promote Corn Growing in New London and Windham Counties The Bulletin makes this offer for the best acres of corn grown by boy or man.

THE RULES OF THE CONTEST:

Who May Compete—Any farmer in New London or Windham Counties may compete. No contestant will be awarded more than one prize. Only one entry can be made from a farm, which can be made by the owner, his son or lessee.

Date of Entry—Notice of intention to compete should be sent to the Bulletin Company on or before May 1, 1912.

It will be better to enter now, even if you may decide to withdraw later.

Amount of Land—Any amount of land may be planted, provided it is actually one acre or over in extent. The awards will be made upon the wield of one acre only. This one acre must be one piece, and may be selected by the contestant at harvest or before, but must come within and be a part of the piece entered in the contest.

Survey—The acre must be measured and staked off by two disinterested parties not in the family of the contestant or in his employ. The quantity of land within the lines must be exactly 43,560 square feet. No allowance will be made for bowlders, walls, fences, trees, swampy or poor land or for any irregularity, either natural or artificial, or for missing hills. All boundary stakes must remain in original position until after the awards are made and announced.

The quality of the corn will be decided by a free labratory test made by the Storrs College expert from one quart of selected corn.

It will require fifty names to warrant the competition.